

DPW UPDATE

June 2002

Volunteer Chief Chosen for Award

By Sandy Helmer, Support Services

Chief Gil Turrentine has been fighting fires as a volunteer for the past 50 years. For his exceptional service to the San Pasqual Fire Department, Turrentine is the Department of Public Works County Volunteer of the Year.

Volunteering is Turrentine's favorite hobby. He enjoys contributing to the community and encouraging young kids to seek a career in fire fighting by providing them with an opportunity to learn.

During his tenure he has made many improvements to San Pasqual's fire department. He coordinated the completion of a new station that

required hands on construction from volunteers, replacement of old fire engines with well-maintained engines, increased staffing, and got newer safety equipment. Expansion of the station is underway.

Turrentine began his volunteer service as an ambulance driver in 1952 and joined the Escondido Fire Department two years later. In 1983 he joined the San Pasqual Fire Department and he was appointed Chief in 1985. He continues to devote his time and energy to the department. Duties he performs include: attending meetings, applying for grants, fundraising, and performing mechanical repairs to keep the trucks in running condition.

The Chief and his wife spend many hours working together paying bills and balancing accounts for the fire department. Together they travel long distances to purchase fire trucks and drive them back to the San Pasqual Fire Station. Newly purchased trucks are used to replace older trucks, which are sold to help raise funds for the department. Turrentine estimates that he's devoted 80 hours a month to volunteering before he retired. He now spends 120 hours a month volunteering, although his wife disagrees and says he spends more time volunteering than he thinks.

Turrentine comes from a long background of firefighters. His grandfather was the very first paid firefighter for the City of Coronado and his father drove an ambulance for the City of El Cajon prior to World War II.



Chief Gil Turrentine with the "big rig" at San Pasqual fire station.

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LUEG Fair Fills Hall and Minds

DPW employees joined Land Use and Environment Group staff to fill the hall at the Scottish Rite Temple in Mission Valley in mid May for the annual LUEG Fair.



Keynote speakers David Lapin and Desi Rosenfield of Strategic Business Ethics presented their ideas about working in a government environment. Another highlight was a video featuring examples of LUEG departments and the work they do daily.

Hosted by Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Bob Copper, the event provided an opportunity to learn more about how staff can serve the public as well as chance to meet employees from other departments.

Keynote speaker David Lapin addresses an overflow crowd in Mission Valley.

Month Means Make Safety a Priority

By Jack Thompson, Safety Officer

June is National Safety Month. Let's all join with the National Safety Council and dedicate the month of June to personally doing all we can as individuals to promote and practice safety awareness, both at work and at home.

Each week during the month of June, information will be sent out via e-mail. Please take a moment to read the information that will be distributed and think about what you can do to promote safety awareness in these areas.

As this fiscal year comes to an end, we want to do everything we can to achieve our initial goal of not more than 24 Lost Time Injuries. This will require each of us to do our part in promoting and practicing personal safety awareness.

Start today by making safety a priority in all you do, at work, at home, and at play!

Sexual Harassment

By Karen Jacobs, Training Section

Have your feelings been hurt?

Have you ever hurt someone else's feelings?

Have you been puzzled by why someone reacted to your actions in a way you did not expect?

No matter where we were born, what we look like, what sex we are or how we were raised, we have experienced these situations. They seem to particularly be prevalent in relationships between men and women.

Public Works has a strong commitment to a comfortable work environment for all of us. As part of that, we have been asked to attend a sexual harassment refresher course by the end of June. We encourage you to think about what you hear in the class *before* something unpleasant happens. As the questions at the beginning are meant to demonstrate, prevention is harder than it sometimes seems.

Here is a list of ways to prevent sexual harassment that will help you think about the topic some more. Between training and this list, an unpleasant workplace situation can be prevented. We all have a responsibility to prevent sexual harassment.

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Treat everyone with respect. Strive to never intentionally hurt someone's feelings. Let others know you expect the same of them. They may be unaware.

Think about your words and actions. Be aware of how they might be received. Don't assume co-workers will be comfortable with any of your actions or words. Watch their response and listen to their words. Stop the action or change the words if they seemed offended.

Don't go along with the crowd. Don't accept behavior that may be offensive. Make your feelings known. Ask that the behavior be stopped. Check out with others to find out if they were offended.

Know the County sexual harassment policy. Ask questions if anything is unclear.

Let's work together to prevent something unpleasant from happening.

Division News

Land Development

Margie Holcomb: Keeping Her Eye on Things

"Those graders should have a water truck following them to keep the dust down," said Margie Holcomb as she stood on a hillside overlooking a site where 600 new homes will be built. With that, Holcomb hops in her car to catch up with the construction foreman.

She knows her business. For the last 15 years she's inspected hundreds of construction sites around the County. What she does today affects the quality of life of 3,500 families who move into these and other homes in unincorporated areas of the County.

As with all DPW inspectors, Holcomb spends her time moving from one site to another, ensuring compliance with plans and regulations.

"We don't count nails in the frame of a house, that's Planning and Land Use," she said. "We *do* inspect grading, wet and dry utilities, road and bridge structures and, now, stormwater issues."

The work is something Holcomb knows, literally from the ground up. She started with the department 25 years ago as a hod carrier on the bridge crew. She's also shoveled her share of asphalt as a road maintenance worker.

Now, with 60 separate projects underway, she's putting her knowledge to good use. While many of the department's inspectors are civil engineers, Holcomb worked into her job by taking classes at night at San Diego State University, City College, Cuyamaca College and through DPW's training program. Today, her experience and knowledge pays off for the people of San Diego County.

"I never really thought about how much impact we have on the public," she said. "I guess we really *do* make a difference."



Construction Inspector Margie Holcomb finds a problem at a construction site.

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Management

The Challenge of Recycling Even More

Last December the Board of Supervisors directed us to develop a plan that would increase the County unincorporated area's solid waste diversion rate to meet or exceed the State's 50 percent requirement, and to facilitate service and recycling efforts in backcountry.

Solid Waste went to work. Jon Rollin, J Taylor, Mark Lewis and Orelia Sowter all set out to information. They conducted surveys with businesses, residents and solid waste collectors, and a benchmark study with other counties with backcountry areas. They met several times with the County's franchised trash collectors, consulted with state Waste Board staff and analyzed current documentation and reporting procedures.

Once the information was collected, the trick was using it to form a plan. The program is proactive, but to meet the state's requirement, more needs to be done. Staff is working to set up recycling centers in the backcountry, but it's a big area, covering most of the County.

New Focus

Since the diversion rate is based on tonnage that gets disposed of at the landfill, the most important new strategy is enhanced focus on diverting heavy things, especially Construction and Demolition materials, called C & D. • Actions include: 1. Increased promotion the CalMax Materials Exchange Web site. On this Web site, businesses can post materials available for trade or purchase so they can be reused; 2. Encouraging C and D operational plants wishing to locate in the County; 3. Drafting a special C and D County Ordinance; 4. Increased outreach and enforcement of the County Code. Emphasis will be on assisting large business by helping identify waste that can be diverted from landfills.

Another focus will be to ensure reporting and diversion is measured, reported and calculated accurately. Since the County's existing proactive recycling efforts have not resulted in a sustained 50 percent rate, it's suspected that reporting inaccuracies could be skewing the County's rate downward.

Continuing to enhance recycling programs, aggressively pursuing grant funding for programs and recycling, and taking these new focus steps: All will help the County meet the 50% goal. The Board approved the plan May 15.

Transportation

Inventory Complete

By Tom Davis, Field Engineering

It happened in a heartbeat, and during dry weather. The Soil Migration Event (sinkhole) that consumed a car on Tavern Road in Alpine in 1998 is having a ripple effect on the Division 4 years later. As a result of this event, Division staff embarked on the enormous task of collecting data on all the culverts for which the department is responsible.

The inventory is now complete, and 12,823 culverts have been plotted, identified, categorized, assessed for condition, and entered into a database. Approximately 1,400 pipes were identified as deficient, with rust, holes or both, with repair or replacement indicated. In the last 3 ½ years, 511 of these deficient pipes have been repaired or replaced. This was done on a "worst-first" basis.

County forces worked on 258 pipes, and 253 pipes were contracted out. Division staff, including Allen Holmquist, Giacomo Paniagua, Edgar Garcia, Loonan Lee, Don Wiltse and some Road Crews, continues to work on repairing or replacing the estimated 889 pipes that still need attention.